

# Middle East Media Educator

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## MEME 2011: Editorial and Table of Contents

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## **MEME 2011: Editorial and Table of Contents**

### **Abstract**

Cover pages, table and contents and editorial introduction to Middle East Media Educator, Issue 1, August 2011.



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Issue 1, August 2011

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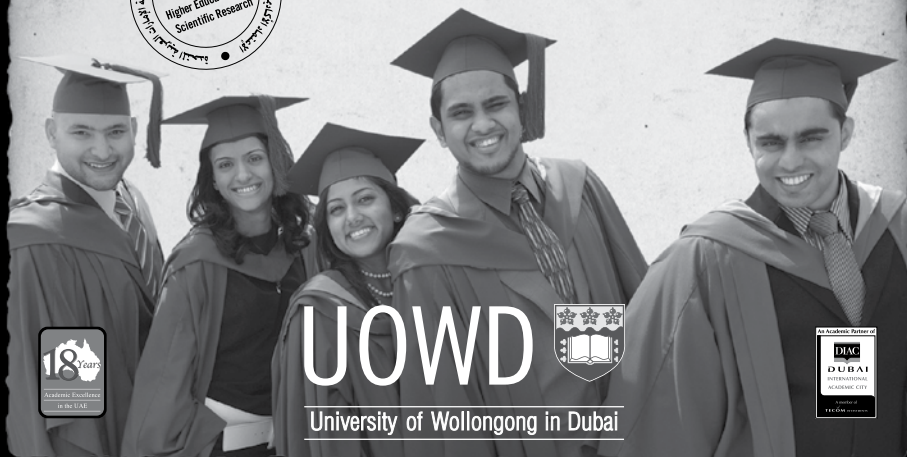
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## **Middle East Media Educator**

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**Middle East Media Educator** (MEME) is a refereed journal published annually at the University of Wollongong in Dubai. It was inspired by and takes as its model Asia Pacific Media Educator (APME) which has been published at the University of Wollongong in Australia since 1996, founded and still edited by Eric Loo. Like APME, MEME "aims to bridge the gap between media educators and practitioners."

MEME is the first such journal in the Middle East, and it will strive to encourage dialogue between industry and academe in a region where informed analysis of the media isn't widespread. Educators struggle to find textbooks and case studies that are relevant to the unique situation in the Middle East region because most teaching resources are developed in other parts of the world.

Research articles and commentaries about the state of the media, media professions, media education, and other topics relevant to the region are welcome. Until study of the media, media professions, and media contexts in the Middle East becomes far more widespread, MEME will tend to be eclectic in its editorial policy. We welcome articles for Issue 2 in August 2012 and will consider abstracts and article proposals for that issue by the end of December 2011.

As we prepare to publish the first issue of MEME, details of subscriptions and online access are not yet available. Please check the University of Wollongong in Dubai website ([www.uowdubai.ac.ae](http://www.uowdubai.ac.ae)) from September 2011 for information on subscriptions or to download articles. For information, contact: [alma.kadragic@uowdubai.ac.ae](mailto:alma.kadragic@uowdubai.ac.ae).

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## Introduction

Although I have been living and working in the UAE since 2005, until last September, I had never thought of starting a journal about Middle East media. That changed during a visit to the University of Wollongong in Australia shortly after I joined the University of Wollongong in Dubai as Academic Program Developer. The mission was to meet the key people concerned with journalism, media, public relations, and communications at Wollongong because I was charged with creating a graduate program in media and communications in Dubai that followed the Wollongong model. All of that happened more or less as expected. What I hadn't expected was to meet Dr. Eric Loo who showed me several issues of Asia Pacific Media Educator, the journal he founded in 1996 and has been editing ever since.

My first question to Eric was, is there anything like this in the Middle East? I was fairly sure there wasn't because during my first four years in the UAE teaching journalism and public relations, I had been looking for teaching materials that related to the region. When Eric confirmed that there was no equivalent journal in the Middle East, I recognized an opportunity. The President and other senior managers at the University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD) supported the idea, and we set to work, we meaning first of all Eric who was involved from the beginning and agreed to join the editorial advisory board. He has done much more than that, contributing his own article to this first issue, giving the article on Hafez' poetry which was initially submitted to Asia Pacific Media Educator (APME), and answering the many questions that arose as the process of announcing Middle East Media Educator, calling for submissions, selecting the editorial advisory board, and evaluating the articles continued.

As first in the region, Middle East Media Educator (MEME) has the opportunity to be the platform for dialogue between media practitioners and the academics who are teaching future media practitioners as well as providing theoretical background and wider contexts for existing practitioners. It is crucial for academics to maintain contacts with industry in any area but especially in media and communications and especially in a region which is changing socially, economically, and politically as a result of history and globalization.

With any startup, the beginning is something of an experiment: the expectation is that problems will be identified and resolved while producing MEME continues. In this first issue, we were limited by time. Because of my background covering daily news for a major television network, I set tight deadlines, not all of which were observed, but which kept us on track. A commitment to introduce MEME and some of its contributors in a panel discussion at the annual convention of the Association for Journalism and Mass Communication in St. Louis in August guaranteed the publication date would be met.

In an emerging market like the UAE and indeed the Gulf and the wider Middle East, the pace of everything is furious. Academics tasked with making up for years of education ill suited to a knowledge economy and given heavy teaching loads have difficulty producing research. The push for more research has begun and in several countries including the UAE is supported by the government. On the ground, however, there hasn't yet been much study of the media from an academic perspective. As some of the pieces in MEME testify, media and media professions are undergoing development and change. The result is that this launch issue of MEME contains fewer pieces of academic research than might have been expected. This will change, but for now, we felt it was important to define the media market in order to stimulate the dialogue.

## Defining the Media Market

This issue is organized in four sections with three major ones of roughly equal length. These sections may be continued in the 2012 issue of MEME. Some may not. Perhaps the organization



will change entirely because we - like the media and academic researchers - are feeling our way. In **Section I, The Role of Media in the Arab Spring**, two pieces look at political reform and media in Tunisia and Egypt. Rasha Owais, a former Egyptian journalist now living in the UAE and working for the public relations section of agency TBWA Raad, spoke to journalists in each country for their take on the role of the media and the freedom of new and old media. Dr. Serajul Bhuiyan, Chair, Department of Communication and Dramatic Arts, Auburn University, Montgomery, Alabama, takes an academic's view from the US to analyze the role of media in Egypt. Bhuiyan is a member of MEME's editorial advisory board.

Magda Abu-Fadil, journalist, blogger, and journalism trainer in Arabic, French, and English, living and working in Beirut, considers the state media law in New Draft Media Laws for Lebanon Limping through Parliament. She too is a member of MEME's advisory board.

Dr. Brian Bowe and Jennifer Hoewe in *Clash of Coverage: An Analysis of the Cultural Framing of U.S. Newspaper Reporting on the 2011 Protests in Bahrain* examine how three leading American newspapers - New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and Washington Post - reported on the events. Their article shows Americans and others outside of the Middle East how preconceptions influence how unfamiliar events are covered. It shows those in the Middle East how events there may be perceived in the rest of the world. Dr. Bowe teaches at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan, while Ms. Hoewe is a doctoral student at the Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pennsylvania.

In **Section II, Developing Professional Communicators in the UAE**, Sana Bagersh discusses *Changing Roles in the UAE Media: Instructor, Journalist, Marketer*. She has been and still is all of those which is typical of the UAE and emerging markets where niches tend not to exist, and people and companies try to fill gaps and attack opportunities. Ms. Bagersh is a member of the editorial advisory board and was instrumental in organizing the publication of MEME.

*From Hollywood to Abu Dhabi: Goodbye Team, Hello Me* is the story of media professional Sonya Edelman who had to change her way of working when she followed her husband to the UAE. A former reality television producer, Ms. Edelman is a renaissance woman now engaged in other media areas.

Rebecca Hill has been a prime mover in the development of professionalism in the field of public relations in the UAE and the Gulf as the founding executive director of the Middle East PR Association (MEPRA). The organization existed before she came on board, but was much less influential. MEPRA decided to get serious in 2009, Ms. Hill was hired, and her piece *Public Relations and Corporate Communications in the UAE* charts the changes.

Phil Ryan heads the digital team at public relations agency Four Communications. Based in London, he is involved with Middle East clients and has developed a new platform for media releases that he describes in *Digital Tools of the Trade: The Social Media Fourum*.

Dr. Tina Leshner who teaches at William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey, spent two teaching years in the UAE at Zayed University. Four years ago she arrived with a Fulbright grant to interview and write about the life experiences of Emirati women. The interviews went well, but when it came to writing, she decided against doing it as nonfiction. Instead she wrote a novel as she explains in *Writing The Abaya Chronicles*. Dr. Leshner is a member of the editorial advisory board.

Maitha Al Mehairbi was one of Dr. Leshner's students in Abu Dhabi. Today, she works at twofour54, the Abu Dhabi media zone. When Ms. Al Mehairbi heard about the novel, she volunteered to write *Review: The Abaya Chronicles. An Abaya-Clad Perspective*. Dr. Leshner will know the result only when she reads MEME.

In **Section III Education and Media** the first two articles offer two very different methods for enhancing student learning at various levels. Dr. Swapna Koshy who teaches business communication at the University of Wollongong in Dubai found that essay writing can be taught to many students at once in *Group Work Teaches Freshmen to Communicate*.

Peyman Pejman who was a senior planner with the US State Department in Washington D.C. describes university students performing at an advanced level, investigating the aftermath of the assassination of Daniel Pearl in *Using the Pearl Project to Develop Investigative Reporters*. Thanks to Barbara Feinman Todd of Georgetown University in Washington D.C. MEME was given permission to publish *The Pearl Project. Key Findings* which demonstrates what the students could - and also couldn't do.

Dr. Eric Loo who teaches journalism at the University of Wollongong in Australia contributed *Reporting Religion beyond the Conflict Frame* in addition to providing the inspiration and support for the creation and publication of MEME before and after he joined the editorial advisory board. Within and outside of secular societies, reporting about religion is a problem. He outlines some of the reasons and suggests solutions.

A Communicative Analysis of Hafez's Saba Wind is by Dr. Ali Asghar Kia who conducts research and teaches and graduate student Mr. Saeed Saghe'i at Allameh Tabataba'i University in Tehran. This is an especially significant paper for readers from outside of Iran or Persian culture who are unfamiliar with the poetry of Hafez, arguably one of the world's greatest poets.

Finally, in **Section IV, Conference Reports**, I write about two conferences that took place in the UAE in June 2011. *The Role of Media in Arab Society* was a one-day event at Zayed University in Abu Dhabi. *Begin the Dialogue: Science, Culture and Modernity* was a three-day conference at the American University of Sharjah from June 21-23 although the report concerns only the closing media session. Both pieces first appeared in my monthly media column in *Tempo* magazine and are included here by permission of the publisher BrandMoxie.

**Alma Kadragic**

Dubai  
July 2011